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THE POPE.

Our second day at the Vatican was enlivened by a visit of Pope Leo XIII. to our party of twenty Americans. We were all Protestants and chiefly ladies, but, conforming in dress and manner to the prescribed etiquette of the Papal Court, and selecting one of our number, younger than some but not less self-possessed, unaffected and beautiful, who was accomplished in the French language, to interpret for us, we each received some kind words and a paternal blessing from the "Holy Father." He does not speak English, but our American girl prattled away in French, replying to his questions as to our journey and our homes. She then accompanied him to us each. The Protestant minister who was introduced to the Pope as such, said that he felt no worse a man from having paid the Head of the Roman church a mark of respect, and having had the old man's gentle hand upon his forehead, and heard his kind voice in a benediction. Leo XIII. is already beyond the age at which Americans elect their Presidents, and has his history as a Pope yet to make. He was elected in February, 1868, after Pius IX. and Victor Immanuel had settled some difficult questions and died.

THE KING.

Young King Humbert looks pale, thin and gray—aged beyond his years. He has a hard kingdom to govern, and those who surround the Pope are wise and wily. If the King should trip, the Vatican would not fail to notice and profit by it. There is coolness still between the Vatican and the Quirinal. The millions of church property confiscated to pay the debts of the Italian monarchy are not forgotten. The "temporal power" which a revolutionary people wrested from Pius IX. and handed over to the Tuscan king, has never been conceded. Besides this, the Italian debt, made up of the debts of the united kingdoms, is enormous. The income is from direct taxes (13 per cent. in Rome) almost exclusively. A vast and unemployed army; a large, expensive and useless navy; bankrupt railroads with government guaranties; a multitude of idle priests with no parishes, notwithstanding the 20,000 remitted to civil life by confiscation of the monasteries; all these things impoverish a country. United Italy, with Rome as its capital, a common currency and common laws, a great nation at Peace, trade improving, agriculture flourishing, art patronized, a land more visited by strangers, because richer in historic monuments than any other,—these are some of the present elements of Italian prosperity. If—and I am aware of the size of that "if"—if peace continues, if church and state can be harmonized, if the civil administration is wise and just, and the foreign policy such as to engage the approval of other nations, Italy has before her a grand future, grander than her best past. For old Rome was heathen; Medieval Rome was the prey of barbarians. Modern Italy has been under the harrow of superstition, bigotry, tyranny and distracting war, compelling disunion.

Our third day at the Vatican was spent in the picture galleries, porticos and chapels. Of the latter, the Sistine, with its ceiling and wall frescoes painted by Michael Angelo, is the most interesting, though time, the atmosphere, the incense and other causes, have compelled its beauty to fade the *Logge* of Raphael, surrounded by three tiers of beautiful porticos, erected by Raphael and ornamented by the frescoes of himself and his pupils, and one room in the gallery containing the celebrated painting of

the Transfiguration, by the same artist, are all I can now mention.

HIGH MASS IN ST. PETER'S.

The pavements and portico of St. Peter's were blistering under an August sun, as we entered its lofty vestibule. It was as cool as autumn within. The grand interior never disappoints. You do not comprehend its vast proportions. They grow upon you. But you are filled with a sense of the littleness of everything in general and yourself in particular. Devotees kiss the worn toe of St. Peter. People kneel along the marble pavement in prayer. The ever-burning lamps illumine the altar. The intoned prayers of a multitude of priests are responded to by a choir in one of the chapels. The great arches resound to the sweet and strong melody. Curiosity fades away. A sense of grandeur fills your soul. The music rises and falls and you seem floating upon its palpitations. It seems like Paradise, if it is not like heaven. The busy intellect unquestioningly rests. The unquiet conscience feels no compunctions. The robed priests seem to be nearer God than yourself. You worship, as by proxy. You worship, you ask not, know not, why or what, except that it seems something so grand as to be worshipful. The touching, towering voices of the choir rise on billows of harmony, or break upon some far-off shore of melody, with grand resonance. Just then a sad, sweet cry of pain and penitence comes in minor plaintiveness to voice the deeper mystery of the heart—the atoning sacrifice—the confessing, trusting guilt. The AMEN, prolonged, repeated, assuring and triumphant, completes the musical story of human experience. One feels, that, good or bad, he is saved!

It seems to me as I turned away, that I had caught a glimpse of one secret of ritualistic power. It floats a wicked man into a heaven of the senses, and provides a perfected and vicarious worship. His lazy soul delights to drift on waves so beautiful. Only when alone with himself does he feel the need of other salvation. Rome provides for all that too. Confession, restitution, flagellation, absolution, purchased by him self, pronounced by adequate authority. Why stop in reformed Catholicism or in English or American Ritualism. The logical rest and home of a soul that wishes to escape individual responsibility for its own sin and salvation, is Rome. R. B. H.

THE ANTI-SLAVERY CONFERENCE.

We believe the Conference at Brussels is the first conference held between Christian nations for a purely philanthropic purpose. The plenipotentiaries have not been called together to accommodate international differences, but to join hands in a great moral work. We trust that the success of the conference may be so marked as to induce the Great Powers to take common action upon other moral evils. The spirit trade with Africa is scarcely less horrible than the slave trade. In one respect, indeed, it is more horrible, for it is in the hands of nominally civilized and Christian merchants. Christian nations need to combine to stamp out this curse—the ruin of whole races of savages and the shame of Christianity and civilization.—*Messiah's Kingdom*.

Dr. Daniel Breed of Washington has offered prizes for essays on Peace topics to the Friends' Schools in Great Britain, the United States and Canada.